DECREE

RELEGATING

SAINT FRANCIS SERAPH CHURCH
CINCINNATI, OHIO

TO PROFANE BUT NOT SORDID USE

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

In 1858 a Catholic parish was established for the faithful of the Over-the-Rhine neighborhood of Cincinnati. The current church was completed in 1859.

Beginning in 2022 a common pastor served the parishes of Saint Francis Seraph and Saint Clement, both under the pastoral care of the Order of Friars Minor. From this time, the parishioners of both parishes began to work together to fulfill the mandate of the Lord to go out and make disciples of all.

After many discussions had taken place between the pastor, the other clergy and lay staff serving the parishes, the parishioners, and the appropriate archdiocesan offices regarding the best way to meet the needs of the faithful and evangelize in accordance with the mandate of the Lord Jesus, it has been decided at present to amalgamate Saint Francis Seraph Parish into Saint Clement Parish by an extinctive union. This decision has been promulgated by a separate decree.

After careful study and deliberation of the facts, the pastor of Saint Francis Seraph and Saint Clement Parishes, having heard the members of the pastoral council and finance council for the parishes, has proposed to relegate Saint Francis Seraph Church to profane but not sordid use. I have determined that sufficient grave cause exists to relegate Saint Francis Seraph Church to profane but not sordid use.

The following factors contribute to the grave cause which motivates this decision:

1. Because of falling parishioner base, it is difficult for those who remain to maintain and care for the building.
2. Deferred maintenance issues are accumulating.
3. The sight has been identified by the Franciscan Friars, Province of Our Lady of Guadalupe, as being costly and underutilized.
4. There are a declining number of Friars available to continue to staff the parish and church.
5. There are many Catholic churches in close proximity to the parish to meet the spiritual needs of the faithful.
6. The rising costs of maintaining these structures along with aging friars and the relatively small number of parishioners makes keeping this church vital very difficult.

Taking into account the supreme law of the Church, i.e. the salvation of souls (cf. canon 1752), it is my belief that this action will better serve the Church's mission to evangelize and allow for more efficient administration of the temporal goods of the faithful, while continuing to meet their spiritual needs.

Therefore, in virtue of my office as diocesan bishop, in accordance with canon 1212 and canon 1222 §2 of the *Code of Canon Law*, having consulted with the Presbyteral Council on May 16, 2026, and having verified that there are none who legitimately claim rights for themselves in the church or the associated property, I hereby decree that Saint Francis Seraph Church, Cincinnati, Ohio, be relegated to profane but not sordid use.

This decree becomes effective as of July 1, 2026, and is to be published immediately such that all members of Saint Francis Seraph Parish and Saint Clement Parish will be properly notified. Recourse may be made against this decree in accord with the norms of canon law.

Given from the Chancery of the Archdiocese,
Cincinnati, Ohio,
on the 8th day of June in the year of our Lord 2026,
Monday of the Tenth Week in Ordinary Time.

Most Reverend Robert G. Casey
Archbishop of Cincinnati

SEAL

Reverend Jason A. Williams, J.C.L.
Chancellor